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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR (Murmansk Oblast)	REPORT		
SUBJECT	Conditions at "Forest Sector 140-Kilometer" near Nikel	DATE DISTR.	23 July 1954	
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This is UNEVALUATED Information

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. The Forest Sector 140-kilometer is the main lumber camp working for the town of Nikel (N 69-26, E 30-17) and is locally referred to as lesouchastok 140-kilometr, although it is not at the 140-kilometer post or even on the Arctic Highway. The official address is: Murmanskaya Oblast, Pechengskiy Rayon, Posëlok Nikel, 140-kilometer, Lesouchastok. The distance points on the Arctic Highway indicate the number of kilometers south of Liinkhamari. (N 69-38, E 31-20). The work area of the lumber section extends south from about the 133-kilometer point to about the 150-kilometer point. The lumber in this area is mostly pine; there is little birch. The lesouchastok is very isolated and very few workers want to be assigned there. The camp itself is a new one, built in 1951. The chief of the lesouchastok in the 140-kilometer area is Travnikov (fnu) and the chief in Nikel is Alekseyenko (fnu), who often visited Travnikov. There is a small camp beside the lesouchastok where border guards are quartered.
2. Nikelkombinat workers who are assigned to the lesouchastok are required to have a job assignment certificate (napravleniye) from the personnel section in Nikel putting them under the jurisdiction of the chief of the lumber section. The napravleniye is retained by the Forest Sector chief. Also required is a pass (propusk) permitting the person to travel to the 140-kilometer point.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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3. About 60 workers are assigned to the Forest Sector, mainly on felling trees in the nearby woods, which has a large stacking point about two and one-half kilometers from the settlement. The timber is loaded on trucks and taken to the factory at Nikel to be manufactured into building material for the town's building program. Most of the workers are married and have families; about 20 women and children are members of workers' families. The section also employs three unmarried girls: one is a nurse, one loads lumber, and the third checks the lumber in. A carpentry brigade is part of the Forest Sector and has six workers. The leader of the brigade, who does the same kind of work as the brigade members, is Mikhail Plokhail. In spring 1953, the carpentry brigade was building dwellings which were intended to house lesouchastok workers' families, who now must live at a settlement near the former brick factory at the 91-kilometer point. In one case, a large building which had served as a school at the brick factory settlement was dismantled and hauled by hand (sic) to the lesouchastok, where it now serves as a dwelling unit. New housing units built by the carpentry brigade have walls made of round logs and caulked with burlap. There are no foundations or cellars, the bases being merely log stumps.
4. Even though the lack of housing at the lesouchastok forces workers' families to live in the brick factory settlement at the 91-kilometer point, the workers themselves must live in the barracks at the lesouchastok. Eighteen to twenty men live in barracks. Each worker has a cot, mattress, night table, pair of sheets, a cover, and a pillow. The cots are placed side by side in a single row. A brick stove is set in the middle of the barracks and it is here that the workers prepare their meals. A charwoman takes care of the cleaning of the barracks and also brings water for shaving and cooking purposes. A toilet is located about 20 or 30 meters away. The workers' families live at the brick-factory settlement in wooden buildings, some of which are barracks. The settlement has about 300 to 400 inhabitants, only some of whom are families of men who work at the lesouchastok. Of this population, about 100 of the inhabitants are children. The settlement has a store. The men join their families on Saturdays.¹
5. The workers carry the usual woodcutters' tools: axes, saws, wedges, etc. They normally wear regular Soviet working clothes, with nothing distinctive to this particular area. Workers' winter clothing includes a sweater or padded jacket and trousers. Men who actually work in the forests wear a canvas rain protector over their outer clothing. They wear either leather boots or felt boots (valenki).
6. Forest Sector workers are awakened at 0700 hours. There is a washroom nearby and, after washing, the workers have breakfast, usually consisting of tea, bread, and butter or preserves. The work day begins at 0800, at which time the workers disperse, each going to his own job. Those who work in the forests are gone all day. The farthest distance they usually work from the camp is two or three kilometers. In winter they go to their working sites on skis. Those who work within the camp area have lunch at 1200 hours. This meal usually consists of cold food or canned goods. Work is resumed at 1300 hours and continues until 1700 hours.
7. After the workers finish work each day, they wash, change into street clothes and go to the lesouchastok store to buy food for the evening meal. This meal is cooked on the stove inside the barracks. After dinner, each man turns to his own interests, most of them preferring to play cards. A game called malchik is most popular and often continues until midnight or sometimes as late as 0200 hours. Every night except Saturday and Sunday, a major from the border guards checks to see that all the men are present in the camp. Most of the workers go to bed at 2200 or 2300 hours. The men sleep in their underwear.

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8. Workers quit an hour or two early on Saturdays. This practice is forbidden but the men do it anyway. They change their clothes and wait for the bus to take them to Nikel or to their families living at the brick-factory settlement. While waiting, they have drinks. Some men drink so much that, when they arrive at the family settlement, they have to be carried off the bus.
9. In the morning the workers talk mostly about their jobs, what areas they have been working in, and where they are about to work. In the evening they talk about their families and about going on leave. Some men, especially those with families, take their vacations in the immediate area of the lumber camp. While on vacation, they go hunting and fishing and often sell their catch to persons back at the camp or in Nikel.
10. Upon arrival [] put into the larger of the two hostels. This was a barrack, about 15 to 20 meters in length, built of boards, probably with sawdust in between the boards for insulation against cold weather. It consisted of a single room and contained 18 iron bedsteads, two tables, bedside lockers (one per two persons), wooden benches, and a brick stove in the middle for heating and cooking. This accommodation cost [] 15 rubles per month. Naturally, there was no bathroom and everyone washed outside the hut, where a metal container was nailed on a tree, with a press button at the bottom. The water was supplied in jugs by the charwoman, but the men had to fill the metal container themselves, as required. Most of the men just used their tin mugs for a quick wash in the mornings. The nearest public baths were at Nikel. The privy was about 20 meters away from the barracks and was only a primitive outhouse.
11. As there was no canteen, [] co-workers had to buy their provisions at the general store on the main street and prepare their own meals as well as they could. [] food for an average day consisted of the following:
- Breakfast. A very quickly prepared meal of tea, bread and butter, with sausage or tinned meat left over from the previous evening meal.
- Lunch. Tea, bread and butter, and some heated up tinned meat or fried sausage.
- Dinner. [] usually [] a fairly thick Russian soup out of various tinned foods, such as borshch, pork, beef with vermicelli, etc. No fresh potatoes were available; dried ones were obtainable.
- The cost of this food came to about 15 to 25 rubles per day. On a salary of 700 rubles gross (about 570 net) things would have been very difficult but for the 2,000 rubles assistance that was paid to recruits on arrival.
12. The only general store at the Forest Sector was situated on the main street and sold a very limited choice of food and clothing. Nobody complained about this lack of shopping facilities as everyone knew it is healthier not to complain about such matters in the Soviet Union. The shop was open on weekdays except on Tuesdays and Fridays, when it opened only in the evenings. The reason for this was that the girl who worked there, named Nina, went on these days to Nikel for fresh supplies and money. On Sundays the shop was closed all day. In the food line, the shop sold brown and black bread, and beef, pork, meat pie (pashtet), treska (dried cod), beef with vermicelli, borshch, shchi, all canned, and also macaroni and vermicelli, as well as other cereals; and butter and sausages. In [] three months [] fresh meat for sale twice: pork at between 17 and 25 rubles per kilogram, depending on the cut. Fresh fish (mor'skov okun) was seen at this shop about four times [] the price was eight rubles per kilogram. Sweets and biscuits could also be obtained at the store.

The prices of the food items were as follows. They were the same as at Nikel, but about ten percent higher than in Leningrad.

Svinaya tushonka 13 rubles and few kopeks per
(stewed pork) 600 grams.

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<u>Tushonaya govyadina</u> (stewed steak)	9 rubles per 600 grams.
(Both of the above came from the Tallinnskiy Myasokombinat, Estonia.)	
<u>Pashtet</u> (minced liver and meat)	6.40 rubles for a tin of 400 grams.
Sugar	11.20 rubles per kilogram.
<u>Treska</u> (cod)	8 rubles for a tin of 300 grams.
<u>Treskovaya pechen</u> (cod roe)	12 rubles for a tin of 300 grams.
(The last two fish items were not very popular as they were packed in some rather unpleasant vegetable oil and were also expensive.)	
<u>Lapsha</u> (vermicelli with meat)	5.95 rubles for glass jar of approximately one-half liter.
<u>Borshch</u> and <u>shchi</u>	Same price as the <u>lapsha</u> ; these two Russian soups were also packed in one-half liter glass jars and contained some meat.
Macaroni (dry)	3.50 rubles per kilogram.
Vermicelli	About 5 rubles per kilogram.
<u>Ovsyanke</u> (oatmeal)	2.90 rubles per kilogram.
<u>Psheno</u> (millet)	About 6 rubles per kilogram.
<u>Grechnevaya krupa</u> (buckwheat),	7 to 9 rubles per kilogram.
Butter	24 to 32 rubles per kilogram.
Margarine	Packet of 200 grams at 3.14 rubles each.
Sausages	Garlic sausage about 10 rubles per kilogram. Polish type of sausage 20 rubles per kilogram and another rather expensive variety at 37 rubles per kilogram.
Bread	Black bread 1.50 rubles per kilogram. Brownish-gray bread at 2 rubles per kilogram.
Vodka	24 to 31 rubles per one-half liter bottle.
<u>Shartrez</u> (Chartreuse type of liqueur)	38 rubles per one-half liter.
Alcohol (pure alcohol)	59 rubles per one-half liter.

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Georgian wines 17 rubles per one-half liter.

Nastoyki Various local liqueurs (twenty percent alcohol) at 24 rubles per liter.

Beer Draught beer occasionally available at 20.20 rubles per one-half liter.

Besides food, the store kept an extremely limited number of clothing items, mainly for children.

Prices for some of the other items which sometimes were available were as follows:

Boots	160 rubles and up.
Shoes	70 to 400 rubles.
Suit	500 to 2400 rubles.
Overcoat	620 rubles and up.
Underwear	15 to 80 rubles.
Radio	700 rubles and up.

[redacted] there was practically nothing for the male worker. Used clothing was commonly bought. Only once [redacted] the store have any cloth of suit length for sale, and this was immediately snapped up for 900 rubles. The only items of men's wear that [redacted] were very cheap looking cotton sweaters at 40 rubles each. Otherwise, the shop had mainly toilet requisites such as toothpaste (65 kopeks per tube), tooth brushes (five rubles each), clothes brushes (15 rubles each), and so on. [redacted] none of these items was used by the population. There were a number of items of clothing for the women, such as dresses, underwear, etc. [redacted]

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13.

14. On weekends few of the single men remained at the legouchastok. [redacted] normal program on Saturdays was to get away from work as soon as possible, then go and change and wash at the hostel, have a quick meal and a few glasses of vodka with [redacted] friends. At about 1700 hours a bus left for Nikel (no charge), [redacted] in order to see "some civilization", such as a canteen and a movie, returning with the same bus on Monday morning. Over the weekends at Nikel [redacted] stayed at the hostel at Ulitsa Mikovana 7. where a number of [redacted] friends lived [redacted]

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[redacted] spent [redacted] time [redacted] either in the canteen or a movie or wandering about the streets, where [redacted] occasionally became friendly with some of the local girls. [redacted] he had naturally spent a certain amount of money on these weekends, unfortunately sometimes as much as 100 rubles, which he could ill afford. When at Nikel he also used to visit the public baths, as facilities for having a reasonable bath did not exist at the Forest Sector, and the hostel was dirty and bug-ridden.

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15. Workers at the Forest Sector are paid twice monthly, on the 8th, 9th and 23rd, 24th of the month. [] while employed at Nikel and its out-stations, such as the Forest Sector, received a wage of between 700 and 750 rubles per month gross. [] this pay was for a class (razryad) 4 worker. After deduction of income tax of 8.2 percent and a childless tax of six percent as well as "voluntary" contribution to the State Loan, he received between 550 and 570 rubles per month net. The highest grade for a worker was class 6, with a wage of approximately 1000 rubles gross per month. Besides the basic pay described above, there were two supplementary payments in operation in this northern area:

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a. Long-service increment (za vyslugu let): ten percent of the basic wage after one year's service and twenty percent for two years or more.

b. Polar supplement (polarnaya nadbavka or polyarka for short) was based on the following scale:

- 1) After 6 months' service — ten percent of basic wage.
- 2) After 1 year's service. — twenty percent of basic wage.
- 3) After two years' service. — thirty percent of basic wage.
- 4) After two and one-half years' service — forty percent of basic wage.
- 5) After three years' service — fifty percent of basic wage.
- 6) Pro rata up to 100 percent, which was attained after five and one-half years' service. There were no further increases after that.

Officials, as opposed to workers, received a salary (oklad) plus the polyarka (same scale as above) but could not receive a long-service increment of more than ten percent. [] the following examples of salaries: The chief of the Forest Sector, Comrade Travnikov, was paid a salary of 2500 rubles per month. In addition, having been working in this area for over five and one-half years, he received 100 percent polyarka and the ten percent long-service increment. [] co-workers considered that Travnikov was doing pretty well, and the general opinion [] was that elsewhere in the Soviet Union he could not possibly have earned more than 600 to 700 rubles per month, judging by his capabilities. Travnikov's second in command, or foreman, earned 1200 rubles a month plus 100 percent and ten percent. The female clerk was paid between 700 and 800 rubles plus 100 percent and ten percent, and the fourth person on the staff, a storeman, probably received about the same as the clerk.

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16. There are no telephones in the Forest Sector, but [] plans for the laying of a line between here and the Nikel kombinat office in Nikel.

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17. The following are personalities at the Forest Sector.

a. Travnikov, Petr: Chief of the Forest Sector (Nachalnik Lesouchastka). His immediate chief was a man called Alekseyenko, who worked at the head office at Nikel and frequently visited the 140-kilometer area in a Pobeda sedan car.

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b. Kulikov (fnu): Second in command of the Forest Sector, actually the foreman of the enterprise. []

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c. Nispalova (fnu): The female clerk and pasportistka (passport clerk) of the Forest Sector. []

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d. Vakhrudivov (fnu):

The storekeeper (zavkhoz). Probably of ~~Tatar~~ origin. Issued bedding, tools, etc., from the official store.

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e. Sotnikov (or Soldatnikov), Aleksandr:

f. An MGB major:

Worked at the Komendatura at the Forest Sector.

18. [] was working at the Forest Sector of the Nikel combine when the death of Stalin was announced. [] none of the workers showed any particular enthusiasm or interest at this news. No one expected any change and felt that things would go on in the same old way even with a new man at the helm. [] fellow workers were only small men and it was none of their business (Nasha khata s krayu) what happened in the highest spheres of Party life. On the day of the funeral the workers had the morning "free". Instead of working, a meeting was organized at the hostel by the MGB major which all the men had to attend. This meeting went off in a very quiet atmosphere, with no one showing his real feelings either way.

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Physical Layout of Forest Sector (See Sketch on Page 9)

19. Between the road junction at the kilometer-133 point and the local Komendatura No. 1 on the north side of the road, there is a primitive wooden bridge (nastil) over a small stream. The Komendatura of the Border Guards, two and one-half kilometers from the crossroads, consists of 15 to 20 Russian log huts and Finnish prefabricated wooden bungalows. Some of the latter are painted with a dark red paint. Some horses are kept in a stable nearby. There is a permanent guard outside on the road, but no road checks. [] not know the strength of the Komendatura. Two and one-half kilometers further along the road the Forest Sector settlement is reached. The small hut on the left houses a generator that supplies electric light to the settlement during the winter months (No. 2 on sketch). The voltage supplied was 220 volts. In summer electric lighting is not available. Kerosene lamps are kept for an emergency. On the right is a smithy and metal repair workshop (marked No. 3). Again on the right is the local store (4), where food and other articles are sold. Prices are the same as in Nikel. Opposite the shop are two houses (5) built of boards with sawdust in between the planks, known as karkasnyy dom (frame house), which are used as family quarters. Next to the shop are two log cabins (6), also used for family quarters. Opposite these is the hostel (7) [] Behind the hostel there is a stable (8) for the horses employed on the Forest Sector, with a small house (9) nearby for the two grooms. Still further on the right is another log hut for families (11). The next house on the right, and about the smallest in the settlement, is the head office of the Forest Sector. It consists of one room with two tables, some chairs, and a wardrobe. This office (12) is not always staffed, as the Chief, Travnikov, is usually out in the forests supervising the work, and the same applies to his assistant or mastyer (foreman), who is called Kulikov. The third employee is a girl named Nispanova, employed as a pasportistka (passport clerk), although she functions as a clerk. She is frequently away in Nikel. The office during the daytime is always open, even when not staffed, and people may come in for a rest. At the back of the office is another small house (13) for families, with a large lake further away. This settlement ends with two houses on each side of the road (14), which were still under construction [] The road continues past the settlement as far as the timber stacking area, about two and one-half kilometers further on.

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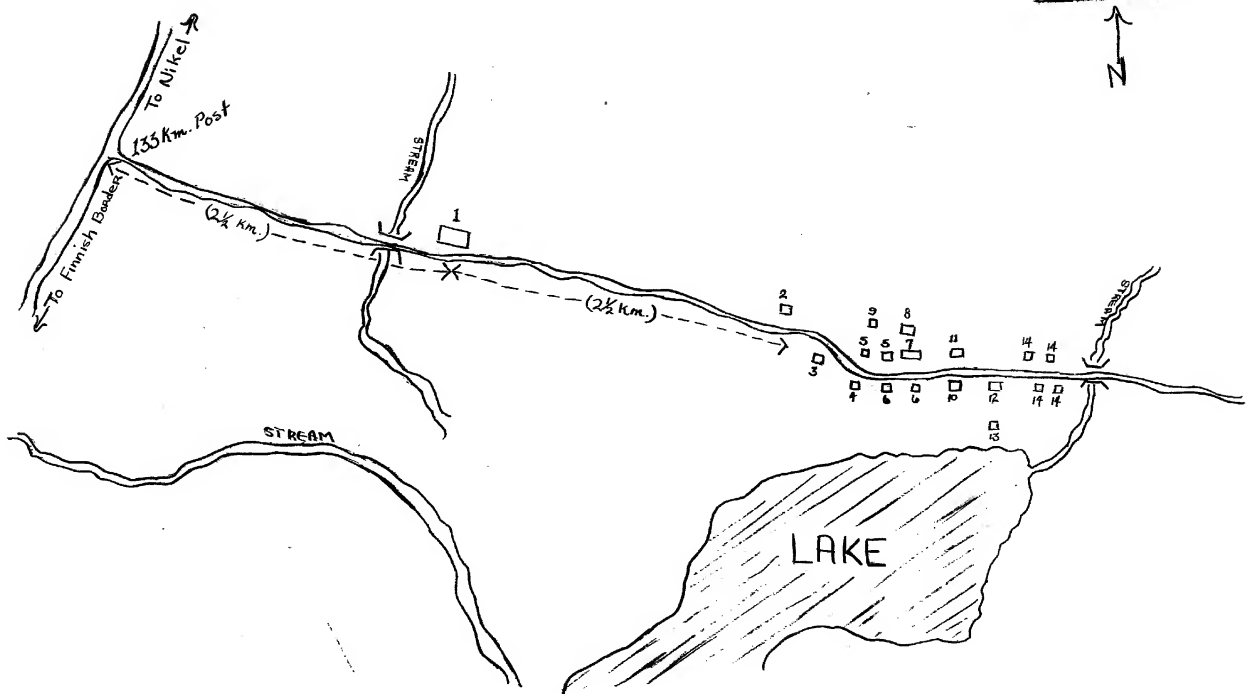
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SKETCH OF THE FOREST SECTOR

NOT TO SCALE



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